

Profitable method Compiled for the Benefit of all Indigent people, so effectually drawn into a MODELL, the like before has not been exposed to this our ENGLISH-NATION:

Wherein is particularized, the several Orders and degrees, for the promotion of the Linnen Manufacture, as also the management and farther improvement of the said Beneficial Exercise to the great encouragement of his Majesties distressed Subjects, as likewise for the disburthening the charge of Parishes throughout the Nation.

Humbly offered to the Consideration of the Great Wisdom of the Nation, viz.
His most Excellent Majesty, and both Houses of Parliament, by R. H.

HAVING some time since humbly offered to the grave and pious Consideration of the Supream Authority aforesaid, PROPOSALS for Promoting and speedy perfecting the Linnen-Manufacture; by which the good Ends before-mentioned may infallibly be accomplished, and more than ten hundred thousand pounds per Annum saved to the Nation; as is plainly demonstrated by what I first printed, intitled *Proposals for building a Working-Alms-house in every County, &c.* Wherein I give an account of a Spinning-Engine of my own Invention; by which a Child of four or five years of age, may learn to spin, and earn three pence a day, easier than a Child of seven or eight years old now; and others nine pence a day, rather than six pence a day without it.

But finding still some very judicious persons, after they have highly exprest their Approbation of such my Proposals in the main, at the same time declaring, That they must oppose me, unless I could propose such a method of Government in those Worke-houses as the Nation may be secured of these four things, viz. The Country from being cheated of their Money raised for erecting and furnishing such Houses; the Poor from being abused, Knaves and unfit Persons from being Officers and bearing Rule; and Justice from being wrested, so as not to redress Grievances and punish Offenders.

To which I answer, That the best Designs or Models may in some measure be abused; but it will not therefore follow, That with a destructive carelessness we should neglect what appears of certain use and profit, but rather to Regulate things so by the best of humane prudence, that they may as little as is imaginable be obnoxious to the inconveniences of Fraud and ill-administration. The particular method to do this, I left to the great wisdom of the whole Nation, as best able to contrive the same; yet since it seems expected so far from me, that without it my Proposals are opposed; I shall with all submission to better judgments, humbly offer, A Model of Government of such Working Alms-houses as far as concerns the preservation of the Stock raised, and prevention of frauds and corruptions in Officers; which I conceive will remove all apprehensions of any the four before-mentioned Mischiefes. That for all Judicious Persons piously disposed for this Good and Pulick Business, may be satisfied before I move further for the prosecution of it. As thus:

Since all Parishes are to contribute to this Work, and every Parishioner is concern'd in the Charge, and may reap Benefit by it, if honestly managed; therefore because it cannot be supposed, that any people will cheater injure themselves, let each person in every Parish be concern'd in, or about the Government and inspection thereof, as follows.

1. That it be Enacted, That all Contributing Parishioners, or the greatest part of them, meet Quarterly in their own Parish, and Elect One or more as their Representatives or Delegates for this Inspection; and so every Parish to chuse and send their Representatives every Quarter of the year, to inspect the state of that Alms-house or Hospital to which they do belong. Each Parish neglecting to Chuse, or Person Abuser, neglecting (unless in case of sickness) to give his attendance at the time appointed, to forfeit to the Treasury of the said Hospital. Each Representative to be allowed 2 s. 6 d. a day by his Parish for the time he is out on this Affair on Horseback, and 1 s. 6 d. being out on Foot; provided that none continue out above six or seven days at one time. Or if this seem too burthensome, two, three, or more small Parishes may joyn to this purpose as one.

2. That these Representatives of each Parish, being assembled, may have full Power to Elect Governors prescribe Rules and Orders, chuse Trustees, appoint Officers and Officers: To see and inquire into the welfare of their respective Parishioners, who are sent thither, and see they be not abused or discouraged: To hear and redress all their Grievances, correct and reform all Disorders: To call each Officer and Trustee

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Trustee to an Account, and to continue them in their Office or turn them out, and Elect new ones, when and as often as they judge necessary. To which purpose they may sub-divide themselves into several Committees, and dispatch much business in little time.

3. That all men in this Assembly may be of equal Authority, and no one person ever-rule the rest; and to that purpose that their Chairman continue but for one day, and so daily whilst they sit a new one to be chosen by themselves: And who shall also, before they are admitted, oblige themselves by Oath or solemn Promises, To do those things that are just and honest: To suffer no wrongs or injury to pass uncorrected: To do nothing for favour or prejudice: But to perform all that lies in his power for the safety and publick good of the Stock and House; and to give a just and true Account to the Parish at his return, when they shall call for it.

4. That no known Drunkard, Gamster, Swearer, rude or disorderly person, shall be permitted to have any Office in that Government; but that for the Encouragement of such as are sent to the House to earn their Living, all inferiour Offices or Places of preferment, may be conferred on such of the the House as most deserve, if capable.

5. That if it be known any person or persons, directly or indirectly, hath given or taken any Bribe or Fee, or offered so to do, in order to obtain or confer any Office or Trust, or do improve his Interest to promote or continue any Drunkard, Gamster, or dishonest scandalous person in Office; that then every such person shall thenceforth for ever be incapable of having or holding any office in the said Workhouses or giving any Vote concerning the same in any Assembly Parochial or Representative.

6. That the Assembly of Representatives have power to injoyn all Officers and Trustees, either by Oath or solemn Promise, That they shall act according to such Rules and Orders as shall be agreed on in the said Assembly: That they shall not conceal any wrongs or ill practices in any concern'd in the Government, but discover the same to the next Assembly: That they shall every Quarter give fair and just Account to that Assembly of all Monies by them received or disbursed, what Goods they buy or sell, and the quantities and prices, and what Goods or money they have in their custody. And that any one Breach of such their Oath or Promise herein, shall be punished as in the case of Perjury; and besides, the offender to make satisfaction for what he hath detained, imbezilled, or defrauded, to the House or those that intrusted him.

7. That for the building and first stocking such Work-houses, every Parish and Parishes, united as aforesaid, shall (till the same are finisht, and Government settled) send such their Representatives every fortnight or four weeks, who shall carry the proportion of Money payable thereunto by such Parishes respectively. And that all Expenditors, Overseers, and Trustees employed for carrying on the Work, shall be chosen by such Representatives, and be accountable to them every fortnight, till the House be finisht and settled as aforesaid.

This method of Government or Inspection I humbly offer as most safe, because from Head to Foot the interest of one Member hath its dependance on the other. Interest is a thing that governs all people in the World, both good and bad. A good man knows 'tis his greatest Interest to live honestly and uprightly in the sight of God and Man; because then he believes a blessing attends him. A bad man, though so foolish as not to regard his future happiness, will yet act honestly too, when it is for his advantage so to do. Now according to the Constitution of the Government here prescribed, every mans Interest is linked together. As,

1. 'Tis the Interest of each Parish to elect honest Representatives.

2. 'Tis the Interest of these Representatives to act righteous things, and elect honest Trustees, not only because if they betray their Trust for Favour, Bribes, or Prejudice, they are in danger of punishment and dishonour; but also because their own private Interest lies at stake in the common interest of the Parishes.

3. 'Tis the interest of the Officers and Trustees, whether honest men or Knaves, to do honestly, because then they may continue in their Places of reasonable profit; but if they do otherwise under so many Eyes, and such frequent Inspections, they cannot hope to conceal their Misdemeanours, and then must be severely corrected, and pay dearly for it.

Thus much for the Form of Government relating to the election and qualification of Governors; I shall now adde a few words concerning the Persons to be governed, the rather for that I finde our designe abusively represented, as if we intended these Houses to be places of slavery, and to keep people there all their lives; whereas I propose only this,

1. That the Children of all poor people, who are chargeable to the Parish, be without abuse employed in these Houses at four or five years old and upwards; and all impotent people having one hand, to worke, and such that can make use of their Legs, though no Hand, who cannot earn their living at home, and all others that are chargeable, untill it be married people having Children, not designing to part Man and Wife, as some Opposers do suggest.

2. That the Men-children brought up in these Houses, have their liberty to go to Trades

or Service in Husbandry, &c. when they come to the Age of 13 or 14 years; and the Maiden children to have like liberty, if they please, at the same age, to go to learn Housewifery, &c.

3. That all Beggars, Vagrants, &c. who have no Habitation, nor will earn their livings in any lawful Employment, be placed there.

4. That all dangerous persons, Criminals, &c. whom the Law condemns to be hang'd, &c. (except in the Case of Murder and Treason) especially such as are guilty of Perjury and Forgery, may be confined to these Houses, during life, or for a certain term of years; whereby they may have the opportunity to be reformed and made fit for another world before they die: and in the mean time to serve the Publick, being able by their labour to maintain as many more as themselves.

5. That all Debtors in Prison, not able to pay their Debts, or maintain themselves (whereof there are many hundreds ready to starve, having but three halfpence a day, and what they can beg, to live on) may remove themselves to this Hospital; where they may live comfortably and be instruments for publick good. This I the rather press for, for that I have observed such dogged Cruelties in some of our Prisons, where many poor famishing persons have been crowded up in one little Room, without any thing to lie on, save Straw, and that so seldom changed, that 'twas become Muck, and only fit to breed Vermine: And to aggravate their misery, the Jaylor fastned broad thin Plates of Iron, pent-house-wise across the Grates of the Prison, to prevent those who were charitably disposed, that they should not give them Beer through the Grates, but that they might be forced to drink his, and pay two pence for little more than a pint. This unmerciful Cruelty have I seen in our Nation; And were it not better to have so many people comfortably at work, than languishing thus under unconscionable Oppressors?

These are the persons that may compose and fill up these Houses. As for the Officers, the way of providing their Diet, Clothes, and other Circumstances, I shall not here particularize; Christs Hospital, or the like Foundation, may afford a good precedent for us to imitate: Only as a thing most necessary for the Christian Education and happy Reformation of this great Family, special Care must be taken that a godly Minister of a good kind disposition and exemplary Conversation, be placed and maintained in each Hospital; and that the Children be allow'd one hour in each day to learn to read English.

If any doubt whether the Inhabitants of the respective Houses will be able to maintain themselves, my Answer is, That a man who hath health and strength, may by reasonable labour, earn 18 d. a day; a woman 9 d. or 10 d. a day. Men or women, who are impotent, and can do nothing but sit still and employ their hands, may earn with ease 8, 9, or 10 d. a day: Yea, any one that could earn 6 d. a day heretofore, shall in this house as easily earn 9 d. or 10 d. a day. A Child of moderate understanding at four or five years old, which cost the Parish 1 r. 6 d. or 2 r. a week keeping, may after two months teaching, earn 3 d. a day the first year, the second year 5 d. a day, the third year 7 d. a day, and the fourth year 9 d. a day: so that at nine years of age, they may earn more than any woman by the same employment can do without the help of our Engine: So that all may live comfortably on: so easie an employment as cannot possibly do them hurt. And by this means all the Nation will suddenly be bred up to such an excellent profitable way of Industry, that no Nation in the world can exceed us; which without this Expedient, can never be effected with so much Expedition, Profit, and Ease.

Thus much I have propos'd, for the satisfaction as I hope of those who are the most judicious Objectors, or at least so far, as that with their Corrections, it may be made feazable and acceptable to the great Wisdom of the Nation. In the mean time I leave my Proposals, as a Ship without Governour, running a drift amongst the raging waves between the highest Rocks, and the shallow Sands, attended with Storms, Calms and Cross-winds; yet laden with Treasure sufficient to enrich the whole Kingdom to that degree, that there may not be one Beggar in the Nation. Nay, I will affirm, that 'tis more than 3000 l. a day lost to the Nation for every day in the year, whilst it is neglected; besides the loss of what is of a far greater value, as may be more plainly demonstrated, if desired.

Now would I crave leave to add a word or two to another sort of People, whom I cannot so properly call Objectors, as Opposers of my Proposals, since they are so Censorious as to judge and condemn them before they have read them, or know what my Reasons are; and so regardless of the happy Reformation intended thereby, that they think it too much to part with their unnecessary self-interest, and contribute a small Assistance for improving the best and most profitable Expedients, crying out, *The old way is best, and the work will be better done at home by their own fires*; when perhaps the wood is stoln out of their Neighbours hedge) And that the Parents may best bring up their own Children. Though too true it is, that instead of bringing them up in Industry to earn their Livings at five or six years old, and to be instructed in good manners both towards God and man, they now generally at four or five years old

learn of their Parents to curse, swear, lye, beg and steal, until they be fourteen or fifteen years of age; and so addicted to vice, that they are not fit for a good man to take into his house. And thus from generation to generation have they been, and are brought up to live and dye most miserably. To these Gentlemen I have this to offer, viz. Suppose, Sirs, there were no Profits to be reap'd, That what we contribute is only a meer Act of Charity, accomplishing the happy Reformation, comfortable Imployment and Maintenance of the Poor. Consider I say, if this were all, whether it be safe to keep that Interest or money which we ought to part with, and improve for Gods glory, and good of our poor Neighbours; since by so doing we may incur his displeasure and our own ruine for ever. Or how can we that are impiouly uncharitable, expect pardon and mercy since it is so, that our Faith, our Hope, and all we can do, without Charity availeth nothing? What more plain and loud Call can there be for an Act of Charity, than when thou seest that by a free and general Contribution so profitable a Reformation may be accomplished? I thank God, I think it not too much, or any dishonour to be oblig'd to support a Beggar for the Poor at the doors of those in whose power to carry on this good work, I am certain, if they be for it, no good man dares be against it. What yet thou dost for thyself, rather had I be a simple object of Charity like Lazarus a Beggar at the door of the Rich, than to be a rich man without Charity, to lift up my eye in the dominion of Hell. What will it profit a man to keep his money in his pocket, when God shall certainly make him miserable for not improving of it? Is it not an infallible Truth, that no good man can possibly be uncharitable; and also that no bad man shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? How necessary then is it for thee to be found in thy Steadfastness improving thy Talent *while thou mayst*? that so thou mayest be an object of mercy in that day when Almighty God shall accept of thy Account, and say, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in few things, thou shalt be Ruler over many Cities. Thou didst not hide thy Talent in a Napkin: Thou hast been a Father to the fatherless, an Husband to the widow, in their distress and poverty: Thou hast fed the hungry, clothed the naked, made such comfortable Provision for their Children, and their Childrens Children, that none of them shall beg their bread, or want an Habitation; yea thou hast contributed of thy substance to turn many Thousands, who like the blind were wandering in the paths of Death, and hast led them into the way of Eternal Life. Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.

Much more might be added for the admonition of those who had rather hide their Talents in the earth, than improve them for the most publique and greatest Advantage; but I leave it as a work more suitable for the most Grave and Pious Divines, the Archbishops, Bishops, &c. whose expressions of zeal to the pious ends of this Designe, have invited me to believe they will not be wanting to contribute their assistance, whereby to encourage those who are under their Spiritual Care, to be assisting in so profitable and charitable a work; by which the Glory of God, the Prosperity of the whole Nation, and the Welfare and happy Reformation of all poor distressed People, may be at once and together promoted.

If any shall object and say, Such a design would have been certainly embraced and prosecuted, had you propos'd it, in the Generation past; but is not so proper for, or probable to thrive in *this*. I desire to know the obstacle, at whose door the fault must lie: Sure I am, his Majesty hath been most graciously pleas'd to give a Signal Instance, of his Royal Approbation and Encouragement thereunto, though it seem to diminish his Majesties particular advantage, more than all the People in the Nation besides. His Illustrious Highness Prince Rupert, that eminent Promoter of the Prosperity of our Kingdom, and several Noble Peers in particular have express'd themselves satisfied with the Utility of the Design: divers Reverend Prelates and Divines have declared their great and unanimous Zeal for promoting the work. And not a few worthy Gentlemen of the House of Commons are convinced, that no other expedient yet offer'd, can so certainly, speedily, and easily accomplish the good ends designed. And why then may not this Age be as proper as the age past, for this hopeful Plant to flourish in, under so many cherishing Influences.

Howbeit with all humble submission I refer the same, and all that I have said, to the favourable Construction and grave Consideration of the great wisdom of the Nation; beseeching God to direct their Councils, and bless their Enterprises, as may make most for his Glory, and the Nations Prosperity.

F I N I S.

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